

1 Timothy Chapter 5

Throughout the New Testament the Church is described by a number of metaphors and analogies:

- 1 Peter 2:9, it is called a “Holy Nation” showing our common citizenship in the heavenly realm.
- ALSO in 1 Peter 2 the church is described as a “Royal Priesthood.” This depicts the believer’s access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- John 15:5 The church is compared to a VINE. Through the grace of God we share a common connection to the LIFE of God.
- Ephesians 2 the church is called “A Temple” built on the solid foundation of the Apostles Doctrine with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone.
- 1 Corinthians 12 the church is compared to “A Body.” This expresses our common life and dependency on Christ who is our Head.

The metaphor that best fits our study this morning is found in a number of places in the New Testament it is the image of a family.

Galatians 6:10 **So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

- I love the doctrine of adoption and the beautiful picture of God gathering the hurting, the outcasts, the solitary and setting them in His loving family.

NKJV - Psalm 68:6 **God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.**

In God’s created order, the Family is the foundational element of society, divinely established to display the image of the creator.

- The Father, Son and Holy Spirit eternally dwell as a plurality in perfect unity. SO God designed the first man and his wife to dwell as a plurality in a “One Flesh” union.

1 John 4 Says LOVE is the defining mark of the “Family of God.”

1 John 4:7 **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**

In the family, love is expressed in a variety of ways: (example) Patiently working through difficulties with our spouse, Teaching and training our children, unexpected gifts, physical affection. Love also takes a variety of forms in the church. TWO aspects of family love are brought out in 1 Timothy 5, they are:

- Love expressed through Correction
- Love expressed through Provision

Let’s begin with “Loving Correction”

Those of us who have raised children are familiar with what feels like endless correction.

“Pr 22:6 **Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.**

- There should be great fruit and satisfaction when the child is old.

In the family of God, We are all children regardless of our age and ALL of us are subject to correction.

Hebrews 12: 5 **And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.**

6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

- The discipline of the Lord as it is revealed throughout the Bible can come in many forms. It can come through the agencies of human government, which is ordained by God, it can come through church leadership bringing the Word of God to bear on the people of God. It can simply come through the reading of God’s Word.

In the New Testament God has ordained a body of governing elders to lead the church and provide loving discipline for the good of the FAMILY.

Hebrews 13: 17 **Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.**

One unique situation that Timothy faced, in the church at Ephesus (I must admit that I no longer face this particular problem) Timothy was YOUNG.

- How is a young leader to provide correction to older members of the Family of God?
- ANSWER: in Love!

1 Timothy 5:1 **Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, 2 older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.**

- The words “Do not rebuke,” translate a Greek phrase that literally means: “Do not inflict blows, strike or beat upon.” (*NO BEATING UP THE ELDERLY*) Over time the words came to be used metaphorically of reproving or rebuking someone sharply.
- THIS does not imply that older members of the family are beyond censure; it simply addresses the attitude and manner in which such discipline is carried out.

Instead of verbal assaults Timothy is instructed to “Encourage” the senior members of the church.

- This word “Encourage” is translated comfort, exhort, appeal, urge in other places in the New Testament. The word literally speaks of “calling along side.”
- The picture that this word paints is one of care and concern, it is one of respect and privacy. When you call someone to your side you can speak directly into the ear, you can place an arm of support around them and address them face to face.
- This measure of family love in the realm of correction is applicable to all members of the church:

1 Timothy 5:1 **Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, 2 older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.**

- In the family brothers are treated differently than fathers; sisters differently than mothers but the bottom line in all of the interactions is that LOVE is preeminent among all.
- In all of our interactions with one another, we are to function as a family.

- Brothers may not get the same respect as Fathers but you stand by them through thick and thin.
- As a young Pastor, Timothy was to treat the younger women as sisters; this would keep his thoughts and actions pure. (who lusts after their sister?)

Now we come to the second aspect of family love:

- Love Expressed Through Provision (provision for the most needy)

1 Timothy 5:3 **Honor widows who are truly widows.**

God's special care and concern for widows can be found throughout the Bible.

Exodus 22: 22 **You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry,**

Psalms 68: 5 **Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.**

Jesus provided (what I believe was) the greatest blessing to a widow in the town of Nain:

- Background: The Lord Jesus and the band of disciples who were following him were about to enter the little town of Nain, just south of Nazareth in the region of Galilee. The joyful procession of the giver of life was interrupted by the mournful laments of a funeral procession.
- A widow from the town of Nain had lost her one and only son. Without her son she had NO possible means of support. She was left all alone, destitute and reliant only on the charity of those in the local synagogue.

Luke 7:13 **And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.**

- This is the God of Psalm 68: (The) **protector of widows is God in his holy habitation**
- This is the same one who calls US to **Honor widows who are truly widows**

Unlike the modern times when governmental authorities have taken over what was once the exclusive domain of religious entities, widows who had no other means of support were totally dependent upon the synagogue for sustenance.

- Rabbis would make their rounds on a Friday collecting supplies and financial aid from the members of the community and then distributing it to the poor widows who had no other means of support.
- This practice naturally flowed from the synagogue into the church and necessitated the establishing of the Diaconate in Acts Chapter 6. (Look for 7 men full of the Spirit)

Here in 1 Timothy Paul provides instructions on how to express true Christian love and care for widows in the local church. In doing so he establishes a clear division of responsibility.

- **FIRST:** The responsibilities of the Biological Family.
- **SECOND:** The responsibilities of the Spiritual Family.

Paul begins as he should with the Biological Family.

1 Timothy 5: 4 **But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return (recompense / repayment) to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.**

- Paul says that children or grandchildren are called upon to REPAY their parents for the care they received. He calls this LEARNING to show godliness to their own household.
 - Paul's use of the "Present tense" tells us that this lesson is one that must be CONTINUALLY learned, again and again.
 - Because we are selfish by nature and because the aging process takes a long period of time, learning to show godliness to our aging parents is an ongoing process.
- Expressions of Godliness in the home show whether or not your godliness is real. Home is where the real you is on display and where your attitudes and motives are easily displayed.
 - What is the godly response when your elderly mother in-law repeats the same old stories over and over again? Patience? Kindness? Self-Control?
 - How do you care for an Elderly Father who treated you harshly all of his life?
 - Depending on your upbringing you may be called to display godliness to the very ones who have hurt you the deepest.
 - Maybe you had a dysfunctional, alcoholic parent and NOW you are called upon to be their caregiver. What does godliness look like? (Because you have been forgiven much, you also need to forgive much!)
 - Continual displays of godliness in the home are the living proof of a truly transformed heart.

A.T. Robertson in his commentary states: "No acts of piety toward God will make up for impiety toward parents." (if you can't say Amen say: OUCH!)

- It is in this vain that Paul declares:

1 Timothy 5:8 **But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

1 Timothy 5: 16 **If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are really widows.**

- Family bears the primary responsibility in the care of widows. When there is NO family, or when the family reneges of their responsibility the church must step in.

NEXT: Paul instructs Timothy regarding the church's care for it's widows.

1 Timothy 5: 5 **She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day,**

- When you pause and really meditate on this verse you begin to understand the desperate nature of the one describes as "truly and widow."
- She has NO ONE, she is left All alone, the only one she can call upon is the Lord.
- With both the desperate condition and the faith of the widow in mind James tells us the essence of true religion:

James 1:27 **Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.**

The fine print: (read this real FAST)

1 Timothy 5: 9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, 10 and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

- It seems from the fine print that there are Age and MORAL requirements???
- In order to receive ongoing support from the church, to be “enrolled” the widow had to be at least 60 years of age - Younger women were encouraged to remarry.

1 Timothy 5:11 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry 12 and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.

- Younger widows, those still living with a strong desire to be with a man should follow that desire, find a good Christian man and get married.
- The Apostles did not want to encourage idleness among the younger widows so they did not provide continual financial support.
- While the church took care of the POOR regardless of age, they strongly encouraged productivity and responsibility.

The Older Widows, in order to qualify, needed to be women with a good reputation:

- “**Having been the wife of one husband**” This is the same wording used of Elders in 1 Timothy 3:2 (elders - husband of one wife)
 - When you take into consideration the fact that younger widows are encouraged to remarry after the death of their first husband, it seems to me that **being the wife of one husband** refers to a woman who has always been faithful to her marriage vows. She didn’t drop one man simply to find another, she lived her life as Albert Barnes says: “In conjugal fidelity.”
- She is a woman of good reputation and godly character.
 - She has been a hard worker, she is seen as a humble servant among the people of God, devoted, caring, compassionate and faithful.

This implies that the Elders of the church were called upon, even required to make moral judgments when directing the benevolence of the church.

Friends our benevolence begins in the home (I have been just as convicted preparing this sermon as you have been in hearing it)

THE CHURCH: is a Family: Every member is important.

When we consider the elderly and the widow I am reminded of Paul’s words to the believers at Corinth as he expresses the value of every member of the Body

1 Corinthians 12:22 **On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,**

In the same love wherein we were first loved we are called to love one another:

Romans 5:6 (NIV) **You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.**

Has there been a time in your life when you felt truly powerless; like the widows we have been reading about, who were without hope in this world?

- You saw yourself as a sinner and there was NO possible way that you could stand before a Holy God.
- BUT then, at that very moment the pardoning grace of the Lord Jesus reached down from heaven and rescued you.
- He embraced you in his love, forgave all of your iniquity and adopted you into his eternal family.
- He rescued you when you were powerless,

NOW you are a member of His Family,

1 John 4:7 **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**